

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 4 and ending on page 1, line 10, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention relates to a novel combination of a soft steroid, in particular loteprednol, and at least one antihistamine, such as, for example, azelastine and/or levocabastine, for simultaneous, sequential or separate administration in the local treatment of allergies and airway disorders, for example of ~~allergic rhinitis (rhinoconjunctivitis)~~ allergic rhinitis or rhinoconjunctivitis.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 14 and ending on page 2, line 12, with the following amended paragraph:

The number of allergic disorders is increasing greatly worldwide. Studies have shown that on average 7.5% of all children and adolescents worldwide suffer from rhinoconjunctivitis (hay fever combined with an ocular symptomatology) (Worldwide variation in prevalence of symptoms of asthma, allergic rhinoconjunctivitis and atopic eczema: ISAAC, Lancet, 351, 1225-1332, 1998). In West European countries, the prevalence, at about 14%, is markedly higher (Annesi-Maesano I. and Oryszczyn MP.: Rhinitis in adolescents, Results of the ISAAC survey, Revue Française d'Allergologie et

d'Immunologie Clinique, 38, 283-289, 1998; Norman E., Nystrom L, Jonsson E and Stjernberg N: Prevalence and incidence of asthma and rhinoconjunctivitis in Swedish teenagers, European Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, 53, 28-35, 1998).

Despite intensive research activity, the pathogenesis of rhinoconjunctivitis has still not been completely clarified. Even if marked advances in the medical treatment of this disorder have been achieved in the past years, the therapy is still not satisfactory. The acute symptoms (itching, reddening, swelling, rhinorrhea and lacrimation) of rhinoconjunctivitis can be readily controlled, inter alia with the aid of antihistamines. However, they barely have a therapeutically relevant influence on the inflammation which underlies the disorder and is always progressive. Often, ~~allergic rhinitis (rhinoconjunctivitis)~~ allergic rhinitis or rhinoconjunctivitis is regarded both by patients and by the physician as a trivial disorder and accordingly is only inadequately treated. As a result, however, a so-called change of stage can occur, i.e. bronchial asthma, which is to be taken very seriously, develops from the relatively harmless rhinitis. For this reason, it is indispensable to treat even allergic rhinoconjunctivitis adequately and intensively. Only then can the patients live symptom-free and only then can a change of stage, which under certain circumstances is life-threatening, be prevented.